



Plant fallowed fields with barley-vetch, grass-seed mix, or grain

What to do:

Instead of controlling vegetation on fallowed areas with machinery and herbicides, plant the fields in the fall with a cover crop that's allowed by your production adjustment program, such as wheat, or a barley-vetch or oats-vetch mixture. In the southern San Joaquin Valley it may be possible to plant wheat or safflower in the spring.

Some of the state's highest waterfowl nesting densities have been recorded in fallowed areas that have been planted. Try to choose a plant variety that will be plowed down no sooner than June 15 (July 1, if possible) of the following summer—after ground-nesting birds and beneficial insects have hatched. Fallowed fields located adjacent to flooded rice checks make ideal duck-nesting areas.

When you rotate fields, try to choose a new area located within a mile or two of the previously fallowed fields; chances are good that some wildlife, particularly nesting mallards, will also make the move.

Regulatory agencies to contact:

FSA, and USFWS, DFG, for questions regarding endangered species.

Benefits:

- Offers excellent cover, food, and nesting habitat for waterfowl, pheasants, songbirds, birds of prey, and other wildlife.
- Provides temporary habitat for beneficial insects.
- Revitalizes your soil, especially if you include a nitrogen-fixing legume.
- Can inhibit weed growth when grains and legumes are planted.
- May reduce fertilizer needs and associated costs for some crops.
- Provides new income opportunities by creating habitat for ducks, pheasants, doves, and other species that can be hunted. Recent trends indicate that interest in waterfowl and upland game hunting is increasing in California and with it, the market for hunting opportunities.

This vetch mixture (left) and meadow barley (right) are popular choices for cover crops.



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